

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT USNATO 860 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS MOSCOW USLOSACLANT USNMR SHAPE JAN 26.

QUOTE CONFIDENTIAL USNATO 00860

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, PARM, UR
SUBJECT: IS ANALYSIS OF BREZHNEV LETTERS

REFS: (A) STATE 20409; (B) USNATO 842

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS OF THE BREZHNEV LETTERS ON RB/ER, WHICH WAS PREPARED BEFORE RECEIPT OF BREZHNEV'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT. ANALYSIS WILL SERVE AS BASIS FOR JANUARY 27 NAC DISCUSSION ON RESPONSE TO BREZHNEV (REF B).

2. BEGIN TEXT OF IS PAPER:
BREZHNEV LETTERS TO ALLIED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON

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REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE (AT SENIOR LEVEL)

1. HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF ALLIED COUNTRIES HAVE RECEIVED LETTERS DATED 5TH JANUARY, 1978 FROM SOVIET PRESIDENT BREZHNEV CONCERNING THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON (ERW). PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES MEETING IN PRIVATE SESSION HAVE ASKED THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE (AT SENIOR LEVEL) URGENTLY TO COMPARE, EXAMINE AND ANALYSE

THE TEXTS OF THESE LETTERS AND TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE MESSAGES SEEM DIRECTED PRINCIPALLY AT NATO COUNTRIES, THE TEXT HOLDS OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT LETTERS WERE ALSO SENT TO OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE "ALL-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE" (CSCE). FINLAND, SWEDEN AND SWITZERLAND ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SENT LETTERS, AND RECENT REMARKS BY THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER SUGGEST THAT SPAIN HAS ALSO BEEN A RECIPIENT. THE DESPATCH OF SIMILAR LETTERS TO OTHER NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED CSCE STATES CANNOT BE RULED OUT. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LETTER DOES NOT SO FAR APPEAR TO BE INTENDED AS AN INITIATIVE IN THE CSCE CONTEXT.

3. SEVERAL BUT NOT ALL OF THESE MESSAGES WERE DELIVERED BY RESIDENT SOVIET AMBASSADORS DIRECTLY TO THE ALLIED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT TO WHOM THEY WERE ADDRESSED. ALTHOUGH INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE IS INCOMPLETE, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE BEARERS OF THE LETTERS OFFERED NO REAL POINTS ADDITIONAL TO THOSE MADE IN THE MESSAGES, OR THAT THEY ELABORATED ON THE PURPOSE OF THE SOVIET INITIATIVE.

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COMPARISON OF TEXTS

4. JUDGING FROM THE TRANSLATIONS AND RUSSIAN ORIGINALS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE BY A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS, THE TEXTS OF LETTERS RECEIVED BY MOST ALLIES APPEAR TO BE IDENTICAL. UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES HAVE COMPARED THEIR TEXT WITH THESE OTHERS AND HAVE FOUND NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS. THE UK DELEGATION REPORTS ONLY ONE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR TEXT AND THE OTHERS: THE PROBABLY INADVERTENT OMISSION OF TWO SENTENCES HINTING AT POSSIBLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON DETENTE AND EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION AND SECURITY SHOULD NATO PROCEED WITH THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE ERW.

5. THE LETTER SENT TO PRESIDENT Giscard D'ESTAING IS IN MANY RESPECTS TEXTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THE LETTER RECEIVED BY MOST OTHER ALLIED LEADERS, EXCEPT THAT IT INCLUDES LANGUAGE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR THE FRENCH SITUATION. WHILE TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT FRANCE DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN NATO DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE ERW, MR. BREZHNEV CONTENDS THAT PARIS MUST NOT STAND APART AS AN OBSERVER, AND BELIEVES THAT FRANCE CAN EXERCISE AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON WHETHER OR NOT THE ERW IS PRODUCED AND DEPLOYED IN WESTERN EUROPE. THERE ARE ALSO CERTAIN OMISSIONS IN THE FRENCH LETTER SUCH AS ALLEGATIONS OF US PRESSURE ON ALLIES TO ACCEPT

THE ERW AND OF THE DANGER OF LONGER-RANGE ERW
DELIVERY SYSTEMS IN THE FUTURE. THERE IS NO MENTION OF
THE POSSIBLE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS THAT A CHOICE IN
FAVOUR OF THE ERW WOULD HAVE ON DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

6. THE LETTER TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IS TEXTUALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS, ALTHOUGH THE SUBSTANCE IS MUCH THE SAME. SOME SOVIET ALLEGATIONS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN GREATER EMPHASIS IN THE BONN LETTER - E.G. THE

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INFLUENCE OF THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" AND THE DANGER POSED BY THE ERW TO CIVILIAN POPULATIONS. THERE IS SOME STRONGER CONDEMNATION OF WESTERN ARGUMENTS ADVOCATING THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS WEAPON; ALSO THE SOVIET THREAT TO DEVELOP ER WEAPONRY IS SHARPER AND MORE PROMINENT. THERE IS NO REFERENCE IN THE BONN LETTER TO THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLIED POSITIONS IN US DECISION-MAKING ON THE ERW.

SOVIET PROPOSAL

7. ALL LETTERS CONCLUDE WITH A CALL BY THE SOVIET PRESIDENT FOR IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH "WESTERN POWERS" TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL RENUNCIATION OF THE PRODUCTION OF ERWS. THIS APPEARS TO BE A REITERATION OF THE PROPOSAL MADE BY MR. BREZHNEV IN A PRAVDA INTERVIEW ON 23RD DECEMBER, 1977 AND A REFINEMENT OF HIS 2ND NOVEMBER PROPOSAL, DURING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION, FOR A HALT IN THE PRODUCTION OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, INCLUDING ERWS. THE LETTERS TO ALLIED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT PROBABLY CONSTITUTE THE FORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL.

EXAMINATION OF CONTENTS

8. THE MESSAGES PULL TOGETHER ALL THE ARGUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN USED IN THE EASTERN PROPAGANDA COMPAGN AGAINST THE ERW. MR. BREZHNEV CHARGES THAT THE ERW IS INHUMANE, A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION; THAT ITS PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS NEW STEP IN THE ARMS RACE; THAT ITS APPEARANCE WOULD INCREASE NOT LESSEN THE PROBABILITY (SIC) OF NUCLEAR WAR. HE COMPLAINS OF ATTEMPTS IN THE WEST "TO DECEIVE" THE PEOPLE BY MINIMISING THE THREAT POSED BY THE NEW

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WEAPON: TO THE CONTRARY, THE ERW WILL BE LIMITED NEITHER TO THE BATTLEFIELD NOR FOR USE AGAINST PURELY MILITARY TARGETS. AS MILITARY CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE, IT WILL BE GIVEN MORE POWERFUL YIELDS AND USED WITH LONGER-

RANGE DELIVERY SYSTEMS.

9. THE LETTERS GO ON TO SUGGEST THAT THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE ERW WOULD HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON THE "WORLD POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE" AND DETENTE GENERALLY. CURRENT (UNSPECIFIED) NEGOTIATIONS ON LIMITING THE ARMS RACE AND ON DISARMAMENT WOULD, IN A NUMBER OF CASES, BE PUT IN JEOPARDY. (IN THE MBFR PLENARY ON 15TH DECEMBER THE SOVIET HEAD OF DELEGATION WARNED THAT USING THE ERW OR CRUISE MISSILE AS "TRUMP CARDS" IN THE VIENNA TALKS "WOULD RAISE ADDITIONAL AND THIS TIME PERHAPS INSUPERABLE OBSTACLES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS OF THE VIENNA TALKS". THE ERW HAS ALSO BEEN RAISED BY THE USSR IN THE DISARMAMENT CONTEXT AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND DURING US/USSR DISCUSSIONS ON RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.). THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE IN EAST-WEST "CO-OPERATION AND SECURITY"(INCLUDING CSCE) WOULD BE WASTED.

10. PICKING UP A THREAT WHICH HAS BEEN REPEATED MORE FREQUENTLY IN RECENT WEEKS, MR. BREZHNEV EMPHASITICALLY STATES THAT IF NATO COUNTRIES PROCEED WITH PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE ERW, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD MEET "THE CHALLENGE" FOR THE SAKE OF ITS SECURITY AND THE SECURITY OF ITS ALLIES: PROBABLY MEANING TO SUGGEST IT WOULD DEVELOP ITS OWN ERW CAPABILITY.

ANALYSIS OF TEXTS AND MOTIVES

11. THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE VIS-A-VIS THE ERW IS TO PREVENT, IF POSSIBLE, THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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AN ADVANCED WEAPON FOR WHICH MOSCOW HAS NO COUNTERPART, OR ALTERNATIVELY, TO DELAY AN ALLIED DECISION IN FAVOUR OF THE ERW AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

12. THE DESPATCH OF THE BREZHNEV LETTERS HAS BEEN WELL-TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH ALLIED DECISION-MAKING ON THE ERW QUESTION AT A TIME WHEN PUBLIC OPINION IS VERY ALIVE TO THE ISSUE, IN PART THE RESULT OF THE EASTERN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN SINCE JULY 1977 AGAINST THE ERW. THE INTENSIFICATION OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA IN RECENT WEEKS AND THE DESPATCH OF THE BREZHNEV MESSAGES MAY HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY SIGNS THAT ALLIED GOVERNMENTS ARE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO COME TO A DECISION.

13. THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN AGREEMENT MUTUALLY TO RENOUNCE ERW PRODUCTION SEEMS INTENDED TO OFFER ALLIED GOVERNMENTS A THIRD OPTION TO OUTRIGHT ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF THE ERW. IT APPEARS DESIGNED: (1) TO HELP

ACHIEVE SOVIET OBJECTIVES FOR AT LEAST A DELAY IN THE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE ERW IN WESTERN EUROPE: (2) TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE CURRENT DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOVIET SS-20 MISSILE; (3) TO IMPROVE THE SOVIET POSITION FOR THE UPCOMING UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT DURING WHICH THE SO-CALLED "NEUTRON BOMB" WILL BE SINGLED OUT AS AN EXAMPLE OF "NEW WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION".

14. THE BREZHNEV LETTERS EMPLOY OTHER TACTICS DESIGNED TO INCREASE DOUBT AND CONFUSION WITHIN ALLIED GOVERNMENTS. THEY CLAIM THAT NATO GOVERNMENTS ARE OUT OF STEP WITH PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THEIR COUNTRIES AGAINST THE ERW. THEY ATTEMPT TO SOW DISCORD BY ALLEGING THAT WESTERN MILITARY AUTHORITIES ARE KNOWINGLY SHORT-
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CIRCUITING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BY PROCEEDING WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION WITH DEPLOYMENT PLANS. THE BONN LETTER ALSO ALLEGES THAT THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" IS BRINGING DISPROPORTIONATE INFLUENCE TO BEAR IN FAVOUR OF THE ERW. THE MESSAGES ATTEMPT TO PLAY ON NATIONAL SENTIMENTS AND CAUSE DIVISIONS AMONG ALLIES BY HINTING THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PUTTING UNDUE PRESSURE ON OTHER NATO MEMBERS TO ACCEPT THE ERW. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LETTERS SUGGEST THAT THE FINAL US DECISION WILL "IN NO SMALL MEASURE" DEPEND ON THE POSITIONS OF ALLIES.

15. A VARIETY OF THREATS ARE EMPLOYED TO GIVE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS FURTHER PAUSE. THE MOST EXPLICIT IS THE ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO PROCEED IF NECESSARY WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOVIET ERW. LESS EXPLICIT ARE THE WARNINGS OF POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON DETENTE AND THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AND ABOUT THE CHANCES OF FAILURE FOR A NUMBER OF ARMS LIMITATION AND DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS. IMPLICIT IS THE THREAT FURTHER TO EMBARRASS WESTERN GOVERNMENTS VIS-A-VIS PUBLIC OPINION IF THEY DO NOT RESPOND FAVOURABLY TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL (POSSIBLE SOVIET PUBLICATION OF THE LETTER AS PART OF CONTINUED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN). END TEXT. BENNETT UNQUOTE VANCE

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